

Message Text

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SUBJ: BERLINGUER ADDRESSES L'UNITA FESTIVAL

REF: ROME 13264

SUMMARY: ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI) GENERAL SECRETARY BERLINGUER UTILIZED A SPEECH ON SEPTEMBER 14 TO REITERATE HIS PARTY'S COMMITMENT TO THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE AND TO RESPOND TO PRIME MINISTER MORO'S SPEECH OF SEPTEMBER 12 IN WHICH A HAND WAS EXTENDED TO THE PCI. THE GENERAL TONE OF BERLINGUER'S SPEECH WAS CAUTIOUS AND PRUDENT ALTHOUGH BERLINGUER HIT HEAVILY ON THE THEORY THAT THE PCI IS A FORCE WHICH MUST BE PERMITTED TO PLAY ITS JUST ROLE IN DETERMINING THE FUTURE COURSE OF THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE. DESPITE PREDICTIONS TO THE CONTRARY, BERLINGUER REFRAINED FROM RESPONDING TO AMBASSADOR VOLPE'S EPOCA INTERVIEW IN HIS SPEECH. END SUMMARY.

2. PCI GENERAL SECRETARY ENRICO BERLINGUER USED THE OCCASION OF THE SEPTEMBER 14 CONCLUDING CEREMONIES OF THE ANNUAL L'UNITA FESTIVAL (HELD THIS YEAR AT FLORENCE) TO REEMPHASIZE HIS PARTY'S COMMITMENT TO THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE IN THE WAKE OF THE PCI'S
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MAJOR GAINS IN THE RECENT ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS. REFERRING

TO THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE, BERLINGUER STRESSED THAT "NOTHING AND NO ONE WILL CAUSE US TO DEVIATE FROM THIS LINE".

3. AS EXPECTED BERLINGUER RESPONDED TO PRIME MINISTER MORO'S ADDRESS OF SEPTEMBER 12 (REFTEL) IN WHICH HE CALLED UPON THE LABOR UNIONS TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT IN THEIR WAGE DEMANDS IN FORTHCOMING NEGOTIATIONS IN VIEW OF THE DIFFICULT ECONOMIC SITUATION FACING THE NATION AND HE EXTENDED A HAND TO THE PCI. ON THE LABOR ISSUE, BERLINGUER THREW THE BALL BACK INTO MORO'S COURT BY STATING THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TELL "THE PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNTRY WHAT ARE ITS CONCRETE PROPOSALS FOR LAUNCHING NEW ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DIRECTIONS AND NEW FISCAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES WHICH WOULD GIVE SERIOUS PROOF THAT IT WISHES TO OPEN A DIFFERENT PHASE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY". BERLINGUER EXTENDED TO THE ITALIAN PRODUCTIVE FORCES THE PCI'S SUPPORT AND SOLIDARITY IN THEIR PRESENT STRUGGLES.

4. ON THE POLITICAL FRONT, BERLINGUER TOOK NOTE OF NORO'S OFFER FOR A SERIOUS COMPETITIVE DIALOGUE WHICH, HE OBSERVED, STEMMED LARGELY FROM THE CHANGED POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE COUNTRY FOLLOWING THE JUNE ELECTIONS. HE REITERATED THAT THE WEIGHT OF THE PCI MUST BE FELT IN THE PROCESS OF DETERMINING THE FUTURE COURSE OF THE COUNTRY. AT THE SAME TIME, HE STRESSED THAT THE PCI IS PATIENT AND HAS NO INTENTION OF RUSHING INTO THE GOVERNING ARENA WITHOUT OBTAINING SOME MAJOR CONCESSIONS IN THE MANNER IN WHICH THE COUNTRY IS GOVERNED.

5. RESPONDING TO THOSE WHO ARGUE THAT THE PCI IS NOT DEMOCRATIC, BERLINGUER UPHELD THE VALIDITY OF THE PLURALITY OF POLITICAL PARTIES. HE OBSERVED THAT "THE VITAL CONDITION FOR DEMOCRACY IS THAT EVERY POLITICAL FORCE BE GUARANTEED THE POSSIBILITY OF EXPRESSING ITSELF AND ACTING IN A DEMOCRATIC MANNER TO CONTEST THE MANNER IN WHICH THE AFFAIRS OF THE COUNTRY ARE HANDLED BY GOVERNMENTS."

6. FOREIGN POLICY RECEIVED SCANT ATTENTION IN BERLINGUER'S SPEECH WITH THE SUBJECT OF PORTUGAL GETTING THE LARGEST SHARE OF ATTENTION. HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT "ALL PORTUGUESE ANTI-FASCISTS KNOW HOW TO FIND ONCE AGAIN THE ROAD TO THE BROADEST UNDERSTANDING, DIFFICULT BUT INDISPENSABLE TO OVERCOME THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DANGEROUS CRITICAL PHASE THROUGH WHICH THE COUNTRY IS GOING." ALTHOUGH PRESS SOURCES HAD BEEN TOLD TO EXPECT A BERLINGUER RETORT TO AMBASSADOR VOLPE'S EPOCA INTERVIEW, NOTHING ALONG THESE LINES EMERGED DURING THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S SPEECH.

7. COMMENT: ESSENTIALLY BERLINGUER CONFINED HIMSELF TO RE-HASHING WELL-WORN PARTY POSITIONS. HIS CAUTIOUS REBUFF TO MORO ON THE LABOR AND ECONOMIC FRONTS IS NOT UNEXPECTED AT THIS

STAGE. FRESH FROM ITS ELECTORAL VICTORY, THE PCI WISHES TO DO NOTHING WHICH WOULD ERODE ANY OF ITS SUPPORT AMONG ITS TRADITIONAL BASE. ON THE OTHER HAND THE PARTY IS NOT INTERESTED IN EARLY ELECTIONS AND WOULD NOT WISH TO SEE THE CONFRONTATION WITH THE UNIONS LEAD TO A GOVERNMENT CRISIS. THUS FOR THE TIME BEING, BERLINGUER HAS PLACED THE GOVERNMENT ON NOTICE THAT IT CANNOT COUNT ON PCI ASSISTANCE IN MODERATING LABOR DEMANDS UNTIL SUCH TIME AS IT PRESENTS A PACKAGE OF ACCEPTABLE PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION. IN ADDITION, ON THE POLITICAL FRONT BERLINGUER SERVED NOTICE THAT PAST METHODS OF DEALING WITH THE PCI ARE NO LONGER ACCEPTABLE AND THAT A BROADER UNDERSTANDING WITH THE CPI IS NOW NECESSARY AS A RESULT OF THE CHANGED POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY. VOLPE

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